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Dockets Management Branch  
Food and Drug Administration  
Department of Health & Human Services  
12420 Parklawn Drive, Room 1-23  
Rockville, MD 20857

Re: Support for Petition Docket # ~~98P-0203~~

Gentlemen:

I am very upset by the practice of "forced molting", a process in which food is withheld from egg-laying hens for up to two weeks causing stress and trauma. Hundreds of thousands of birds die a terrible death by starvation. The purpose is to shorten the natural molting cycle and get one more batch of eggs before the 'spent' hens are slaughtered.

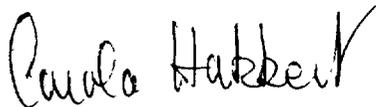
According to recent research, forced molting greatly increases the frequency and severity of salmonella enteritidis among hens. Peter Holt, USDA immunologist, states that this practice 'increases the severity of concurrent intestinal salmonella enteritidis infection (Poultry Science 71:1842-1848; 1992). The result is a sick bird and contaminated eggs. The only benefit is that this practice lines the pocketbooks of egg producers.

In Great Britain and most European countries forced molting was banned in 1987, limiting the forced molt duration to a single day.

The hideous conditions that force-molted hens endure warrant the eradication of this practice in the United States as well.

So please, please stop it!!

Sincerely,

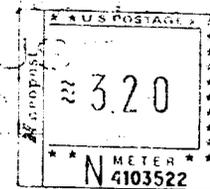


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